

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 NSC-05 DODE-00 MC-02 /067 W

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R 061655Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1621

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 19851

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, OCON, AWACS, MILI, IT

SUBJ: ITALIAN VIEW ON AWACS

REF: ROME 18682

1. DURING RECENT CONVERSATION ON DEFENSE-RELATED SUBJECTS, VICE ADMIRAL PAOLO MAININI, VICE CHIEF OF ITALIAN DEFENSE STAFF, TOLD EMBOFF THAT AWACS HAS NEVER REALLY BEEN IN THE CARDS FOR ITALY.

2. MAININI SAID THAT THREE PRIME REASONS RULED OUT AWACS:

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A. RECONFIGURATION OF THE RADARS TO SAVE MONEY

HAD LIMITED THEM TO THE POINT OF BEING UNABLE TO DEFINE SMALLER VESSELS, THE SIZE OF THE SOVIET KOMAR'S FOR EXAMPLE. THESE ARE OF PRIME INTEREST TO ITALIAN SEA DEFENSE.

B. PLANNING FOR AWACS HAD "NEVER" ENBRACED ANY AREA SOUTH OF ANCONA, WHEREAS VITAL ITALIAN NAVAL DEFENSE INTERESTS LIE FARTHER SOUTH IN THE TYHRENNIAN AND IONIC SEAS AND THE MED PROPER.

C. THERE IS NO MONEY FOR AWACS. HE (MAININI) SPENDS THE MAJOR PART OF HIS DAYS SCRAPING AROUND FOR ENOUGH MONEY JUST TO KEEP THE ARMED FORCES GOING. THERE IS LITTLE POINT TO AWACS WITHOUT THE DEFENSIVE FORCES NECESSARY TO WARD OFF THE ATTACK OF WHICH IT FOREWARNS.

3. MAININI, ANSWERING A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION, SAID THAT MOD WOULD GLADLY HAVE AWACS WERE IT FREE; IT WOULD ALLOW MUCH BETTER USE OF FORCES IN BEING. THE MAIN QUESTION, HOWEVER, WAS PRIORITIES AND COST-BENEFITS, AND HE DOUBTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD OR WOULD COME UP WITH THE MONEY, ABOVE AND BEYOND THE PENDING ARMY AND AIR FORCE ACQUISITION BILLS, TO PAY FOR AWACS.

4. MAININI SAID THAT DEFMIN LATTANZIO HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED ON AWACS (AND ON INFRASTRUCTURE AUGMENTATION FUNDS AS WELL) FOR THE UPCOMING DPC SESSION, BUT THAT HE WILL NOT BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT, EVEN IN PRINCIPLE, AN ITALIAN ROLE IN PROCUREMENT OF THE SYSTEM.

5. THE ADMIRAL DID NOT SEEM TO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AWACS FORWARD OPERATING BASE AT SIGONELLA. HE DID ACKNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH A BASE WOULD REVISE HIS VIEWS ON AWACS AREA COVERAGE. MOREOVER, IT WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE APPEALS FOR POLITICIANS IN TERMS OF JOBS. HE NOTED WRYLY THAT A GOOD PART OF GOI'S JUSTIFICATION FOR ARMED FORCES EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION BILLS IS CAST IN TERMS OF JOBS.

6. COMMENT: TWO OF THREE DEFICIENCIES WHICH MAININI  
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CITES AGAINST AWACS ARE NAVY-ORIENTED, EVEN THOUGH HE NOW SERVES THE GENERAL STAFF. WE WERE NOT ABLE TO ARGUE THE POINT OF RADAR CAPABILITIES, NOT HAVING THE FACTS. NOR WERE WE WELL POSITIONED TO COUNTER HIM ON AREA COVERAGE; THE MOST RECENT CHARTS WE HAVE, CONVEYED VIA A-5274, SHOW NO AWACS AT SIGONELLA (DESPITE PARA. 1.B. OF STATE 269910) AND THE SOUTHERNMOST SEGMENT OF SACEUR'S VITAL AREAS FOR AEW PROTECTION TO REACH

ONLY AS FAR SOUTH AS ANCONA OR PESCARA.

7. RECOMMENDATION: WE STILL BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WORTH  
THE TIME OF SECDEF TO HAVE A WORD WITH LATTANZIO BEFORE  
THE DPC SESSION PARTICULARLY IF POINTS 2.A. AND B.  
ABOVE REFUTABLE. MOREOVER IF USG EFFORTS IN OTHER  
NATO CAPITALS RESULT IN THE EMERGENCE OF ANYTHING LIKE  
A POSITIVE DPC CONSENSUS ON AWACS, EVEN IF ONLY  
IN PRINCIPLE, LATTANZIO (AND FONMIN FORLANI,  
MOST RECENTLY DEFMIN) MIGHT WANT TO HAVE ANOTHER  
LOOK AT AWACS AND ITALY IN THE ALLIANCE.  
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## Message Attributes

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